

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF TRIBAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

WHEREAS, tribal public libraries were created and organized in the 1970s to meet the growing educational needs of tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, tribal public libraries are unique community centers that connect students, scholars and community members to the world of information by providing and teaching access to resources that are relevant to tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, tribal public libraries serve all ages in their respective communities and are located in the epicenter of tribal communities, serving not only as informational resource centers but also as cultural information centers that play a vital role in language and cultural preservation; and

WHEREAS, today, tribal public libraries exist in older buildings that were not designed for library use, nor do they have the capacity to deliver up-to-date technologies and services such as reliable high-speed connectivity for ease of use and security; and

WHEREAS, tribal public libraries positively impact the quality of life of tribal members by providing free services such as distance education, general equivalency diploma classes, workshops, training, after-school activities and

library programs to tribal communities that are located in rural, impoverished areas of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, tribal public libraries must compete for tribal revenues often earmarked for infrastructure such as roads, sewer and water lines, irrigation systems, emergency response systems, adequate medical facilities and communications systems that are lacking in tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, tribal public libraries are filled to capacity but have limited staff to serve tribal communities with basic services, including access to evening and weekend hours as demanded by patrons; and

WHEREAS, tribal public libraries lack the space to create computer laboratories, greatly limiting the provision of information literacy and technology training that would enhance library services;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the library division of the cultural affairs department and the Indian affairs department be requested to undertake a joint comprehensive assessment of tribal libraries throughout the state to determine financial resources and needs for the operation of those libraries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the library division of the cultural affairs department and the Indian affairs department be requested to present their findings and recommendations

regarding the operational financial needs of tribal libraries to the appropriate interim legislative committees no later than October 1, 2008; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of cultural affairs and the secretary of Indian affairs.